

3
A
S E R M O N

PREACHED AT
WITHAM IN ESSEX,
JUNE 23, 1782,

ON OCCASION OF THE
D E A T H
OF THE

Rev^d. CHARLES CASE, A.M.

Who departed this Life JUNE 13th,

In the 38th Year of his Age. K

By JOHN MEAD RAY.

PUBLISHED BY PARTICULAR DESIRE.

The SECOND EDITION.

L O N D O N :

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JOHN MEAD RAY

THE SECOND EDITION

LONDON

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THE very rapid sale of the first edition of this Sermon, and the daily applications which are still made for it, sufficiently convince its author how much his motive in publishing it is approved.—Happy in the thought, that the assistance of a Widow who is left with Seven Children is deemed a sufficient apology for venturing so hasty a composition into the world, its author presumes to lay a second edition before his friends; entreating at the same time the continuance of their candor, and gratefully acknowledging the experience which he has already had of it.

Sudbury, Sept. 18th, 1782.

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Printed by J. Smith, 1811.

A

S E R M O N, &c.

J O H N XVI. 22.

And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.

TH E R E are many amongst you, who are attending the service of this day, with feelings very different from those to which you have been accustomed on former Sabbaths. Formerly, you have been glad when the people said to you, * “Come and let us go into the house of the Lord.” Your chearful voices immediately replied, “Our feet shall stand within thy gates, oh Jerusalem.” But oh how painful to you is the task of attending the present solemnities! How dejected are those countenances, which have here been enlivened with the truest joy! How feeble and how faltering are those voices

* Psal. cxxii. 1, 2.

which

which used here to sing forth the praises of God, in the most chearful elevated notes! How do those hearts bleed, which have so often received the strongest consolation here! In short, the scene is quite changed; and that house is become the house of mourning, which was once the house of rejoicing.—

** How has the Lord covered the daughter of Zion with a cloud!—† Her gates are desolate; her priests sigh; her virgins are afflicted; and she is in bitterness.* Even the recollection of your former pleasures is now productive of pain: for alas! He who was the occasion of them is no more. Thus † *Jerusalem remembered, in the days of her affliction, and of her miseries, all her pleasant things that she had in the days of old:* and no doubt that remembrance was the aggravation of those miseries.

“Tis with a mournful pleasure now,
You think on ancient days:
Then to this house did numbers come;
And all their work was praise.”

WATTS.

Having been requested to take the lead in your worship on this melancholy occasion, it is my earnest desire, and has been my fervent prayer, that I may say something consolatory to you. And that I may have an op-

• Lament. ii. 1. † i. 4. † Ver. 7.

portunity of doing this, I have made choice of the words that have been read, as the subject of my present discourse——“ *And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.*”

These words are part of that most affectionate address which Christ delivered to his disciples, just before his departure from this world. He perceived that they were much distressed by the notice which he had given them, *that his hour was come, that he had finished the work which his Father gave him to do*, and that he was upon the point of returning to him. Their distress on this occasion made a deep impression on his compassionate heart. He seems for a time to forget his own sorrows, in order to alleviate theirs — * “ *I will not leave you comfortless,*” said he, and immediately gave them such reasons for his departure as were calculated to reconcile them to it. He begins with informing them, that he was going back to his Father’s house, where he should not fail to prepare a place for them; that he would soon return to them; that he would receive them to himself; and that during his absence, he would send down the Holy Spirit to be with them—whose office it would be to administer every necessary consolation, to give them every useful direction, and to bring all

* John xiv. 18.

things to their remembrance which he had spoken to them. These, and a variety of other particulars, were introduced into the address which our Lord made to his disciples on this occasion. But because he knew there was nothing calculated to afford them more comfort than an assurance of seeing them again, this assurance was repeatedly given, and in a great variety of language. The text contains one of these gracious promises; in which our Lord not only engages to see his disciples again, but to see them in such circumstances as would produce a joy, of which it would be out of the power of any man to rob them.—“ *And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.*”

In discoursing from these words, I shall

- I. Represent more fully the occasion of that sorrow which was manifested by the disciples.
- II. Consider the assurance which our Lord gave them, in order to remove it: “ *I will see you again.*”
- III. Point out the effect which his return was to have upon them: “ *your heart shall rejoice.*”
- IV. I will assist you in contemplating the lasting nature of that joy, which they were

to experience, at their Master's return :
" your joy no man taketh from you." As
 I proceed in considering the different parts
 of this text, it is my intention to accom-
 modate them to that very melancholy pro-
 vidence, which we are now assembled to
 improve.

In doing which, I hope I shall not ap-
 pear to be taking an improper liberty with
 the passage, as it is not my design to run a pa-
 rallel between your present situation and that
 of the disciples ; their loss was such as can-
 not be equalled. All I mean is to point out
 some particulars in which there seems to be a
 faint resemblance, directing you at the same
 time to derive your comfort from the same
 source to which our Lord led them.

I. I am to represent the occasion of that
 trouble to which our Lord referred, when he
 addressed his disciples in the text, saying,
" and ye now therefore have sorrow."—It has
 already been hinted that the reason of their
 uneasiness was, the declaration of their Mas-
 ter, that the time of his departure was at
 hand ; and if this event is attentively confi-
 dered, I think you will agree with me that
 it was of a very distressing nature. Let it be
 recollected, that Jesus was their affectionate,
 their faithful, and their common friend—that
 he was the most able, and at the same time the
 most condescending of all teachers—and that he
 was the head of that cause, to embark in which

B

they

they had given up their different worldly employments.—Let it also be recollected, that they were about to lose him by a violent and ignominious death—and that they were totally ignorant of his intended resurrection from the dead, on the third day—let, I say, these things be recollected, and you will agree with me, that their sorrow must be great.

(1.) They were about to lose their affectionate, their faithful, and their common friend.—To him they had access at all times, and on all occasions.—Though he was *the Prince of the kings of the earth*; though he was *the only-begotten of the Father*; and though *there dwelt in him all the fulness of the Godhead*; yet he kept them at no discouraging distance; he treated them with no forbidding reserve; but countenanced the utmost freedom and familiarity.—He did not put them on a footing with the rest of the world, but made them his confidants.—These are the words which he addressed to them on this subject, * “*Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you.*”

But (2.) They were not only about to lose in Jesus an invaluable friend, they were also to lose the most able, and at the same time

• John xv. 15.

the most condescending of teachers.—His public discourses abounded with information. In the judgment of his very enemies * “*he spake as never man spake.*” They were utterly at a loss to account for that amazing knowledge which he displayed, and they were the more astonished, when they considered his mean extraction. One of the Evangelists informs us, † “*that when he was come into his own country, he taught the people in their synagogues, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works? is not this the Carpenter’s son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? and his sisters, are they not all with us? whence then hath this man all these things?*”

But if there was in the public discourses of Christ such a display of wisdom, as filled the people with astonishment; how peculiarly engaging and instructive must those discourses have been which he privately delivered amongst his own disciples! — It is certain that there was a vast difference between the public and the private teachings of our Lord. What he delivered to the people in parables, he delivered to his disciples in the plainest language: Those things too of which he gave the people only a general view, he

* John vii. 46.

† Mat. xiii. 53—56.

explained to the disciples: And there were some things in which he instructed them, which he thought proper to keep entirely from the knowledge of the people at large.

—The difference between his discourses to his disciples, and those which were more openly delivered, gave him an opportunity to address them in the following expressive language: * “*Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.*” And almost immediately after he had said this, he congratulated them on their distinguished honour in this respect; † “*Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, that many prophets, and righteous men, have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.*”

If then the peculiar affection which our Lord expressed for his disciples, and the special attention which he paid to them in explaining his doctrine, are considered on the one hand; and the astonishing condescension with which he instructed them in the mysteries of the kingdom, be attended to on the other; it will not appear wonderful to any of us that the prospect of his departure should fill them with distress; they had

* Mat. xiii. 11.

† Ver. 16, 17.

reason for dejection: especially if it is recollected,

(3.) That he was the head of that cause, to embark in which they had forsaken their all. — He was the founder of their religion. — * *He was the author of their faith.* It was because of their attachment to him that the world hated them. — For him therefore to withdraw, and to leave them unsupported by his presence, to encounter the malice and the cruelty of their enemies, was a consideration sufficient to fill them with sorrow.

But if his departure was sufficient of itself to distress them,

(4.) The manner in which he was to leave them was particularly calculated to do it. — No fiery chariot was appointed to conduct him back to his Father's house. The King of Zion was to leave the world without any of those marks of splendor and distinction which mankind so much admire: † *The Captain of our salvation was to be made perfect through suffering.* He had a conflict to support, the prospect of which occasioned him to sweat even drops of blood. — The sufferings of his life had been great and many; ‡ *for he was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;* but the agonies of his death were to be excruciating. — The fury of men, the malice of devils, and what was

* Heb. xii. 2.

† Heb. ii. 10.

‡ Isa. liii. 3.

far worse than either, the withdrawment of his Father's support, were all to have their effect in bringing on his dissolution. — Can it then be wondered at, that the disciples were in heaviness when their Lord was not only about to leave them, but to leave them by means of sufferings the most painful and shocking! Did he discover the tenderest sympathy, the most lively feeling for them, under all their sorrows, and is it to be supposed that they had no feeling for him, in the near views of those which were to close his life? —

I do not indeed suppose that they were acquainted with every circumstance relating to the death of their great Lord; but thus much it is probable they knew, that it was to be violent, and that it was to be ignominious; for he had told them that * *“the Son of man would be betrayed into the hands of men, and they would kill him — and,”* the Evangelist adds, *“they were exceeding sorry.”* — But again,

(5.) The death of Christ was an event which could not fail to distress the disciples the more, because they do not appear to have had any expectation of his rising again. — Our Lord indeed frequently informed them of it, and sometimes in such plain intelligible language, that it seems truly astonishing how they could mistake him; an instance of which we have in the

* Mat. xvii. 22, 23.

passage to which I just now referred you, "*The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men, and they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again.*"—The principal design of Christ in my text also was to inform them of his intended resurrection, "*And ye now have sorrow, but I will see you again.*"—It seems very wonderful that such plain, unequivocal declarations should not be understood, but they understood them not, as appears from a variety of circumstances, and particularly from the following passage in the Gospel of St. Luke, * "*Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, behold we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man, shall be accomplished: for he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles—and they shall scourge him, and put him to death; and the third day he shall rise again.*" And the Evangelist adds, *they understood none of these things, and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.*

This astonishing ignorance of the intended resurrection of their Lord, may well be supposed to have added much to their distress at parting from him.—Had they understood that they were soon to see him again; that the third day after his death would restore him to their sight: their grief on this occa-

* Luke xviii. 31—34.

sion, must, in some degree, have been abated; but they were in total ignorance; and therefore, when their Lord was actually gone, their language was the language of despair; * *“ we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel.”*

I have now represented to you the reasons of that sorrow which Christ's departure from his disciples occasioned in them.—And, my friends, if the reasons of that dejection which this day sits upon your countenances are enquired into, they will in some respects be found to be of a similar nature. Sorrow has filled your hearts: for God in his providence has removed from you a most valuable and affectionate friend—a painful, an able, and a godly instructor—and you have lost him under some circumstances peculiarly afflictive.

Your sorrow may be considered as arising from the loss of a most valuable and affectionate friend.—There are very few to be found who possess the social affections in a greater degree than they were possessed by your late Pastor. He was led by them to acquaint himself very intimately with the different parts of his flock; and very extensively with the most worthy characters in other congregations: by whom, as well as by you, *he was esteemed very highly in love, not only for his work sake, but also for his own*

* Luke xxiv. 21.

sake.—His compassion led him to enter very feelingly into all your sorrows. He could **weep with those who wept*, as well as *rejoice, with those who rejoiced.*—There was in him that manifest concern for your interest, which insensibly prevailed upon you to make him your confident; in doing which there are many here who have reaped great advantage. His advice in temporal affairs has often been found of great benefit; but especially in those of a spiritual nature. It was his delight to administer consolation to the afflicted; to cheer the spirits of the drooping; to inform the ignorant; to establish the wavering; to reclaim the backsliding. In a word, his friendship discovered itself by every possible attention to your interest.

Your sorrow further arises from the loss of a painful, an able, and godly instructor.—Your late Pastor was furnished in a very liberal manner with natural abilities: nor was he by any means inattentive to their improvement. As far as was consistent with pastoral and friendly visits; and as far as was consistent with that exercise, which his often-interrupted health required; he *†gave himself wholly to reading, to meditation, and to doctrine.* The gifts which were in him, he failed not to stir up; and accordingly *his profiting appeared to all men.*—His persuasion of the truth and importance of the Gospel, was firm and unshaken. His views of its doctrines were

* Rom. xii. 15.

† 1 Tim. iv. 13, 15.

clear; his zeal to procure your practical regard to them, as well as your faith in them, was ardent.—His public discourses were plain and animated: they were not filled with speculation, or with controversy; but treated of those subjects in which the interests of an immortal soul are most nearly concerned—his desire was not to be the amusing, but the instructive preacher. In short, he was * *a workman that needed not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth*; and (which must add great weight to all his discourses) † *he was an example to the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity*. ‡ *Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably, he behaved himself amongst you that believe. Ye know how he exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children, that ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory*. But I must not here omit to make particular mention of his concern for, and attention to, the rising generation.—My young friends, you have lost a minister who kept your best interests continually in his view. The early remembrance of your Creator was a duty to which he was often exhorting you: the pleasures of a religious life he often set before you. To use the strong language of St. Paul, || *he travailed in birth that Christ might be formed in you*. As a

* 2 Tim. ii. 15. † 1 Tim. iv. 12. ‡ 1 Thess. ii. 10—12.
|| Gal. iv. 19.

proof of his attention to the lambs of this flock, it may not be improper to remind you of the *institution of your charity-school, which owes its existence to him*, and which I hope will long remain amongst you as a *monument of his benevolence*.

But whilst you sorrow for the loss of your valuable friend and able instructor, there are some circumstances attending his departure, which increase the affliction: particularly the two following; you have lost him in the midst of his days, and in the midst of his usefulness. He has been removed at that stage of his life beyond which you might reasonably have hoped to enjoy his ministrations for many years; and just at a time, when his more than common usefulness rendered his continuance with you a blessing peculiarly desirable. But enough has been said on the mournful part of the subject;—enough to show that your sorrows are not causeless. You have indeed reason for lamentation; and did you discover no concern on this sad occasion, you might justly be reproached with possessing a stoical insensibility. Humanity, friendship, religion, demand a tear from you. It is no proof of weakness; nor is it any mark of an unsubmitting temper.—Jesus, the brightest ornament of human nature, as well as the express image of the divine, wept at the grave of a beloved friend; and in so doing gave us an example of sensibility.—I blame not

your sorrows, my friends, they are natural, they are proper. I am a partaker with you in them. From my very soul I feel for, and sympathize with, you; and so do all the neighbouring churches. You have their pity, and what is far more valuable, you have their prayers.

But though it must be acknowledged your sorrows are natural, yet ought they not to be excessive. Nature will weep, but that you may not weep immoderately, attend to the voice of Religion; to that voice which assures you that **you are not weeping even as others that have no hope.* Great as your affliction is, you have such consolations provided for you as are more than sufficient for your support under it. It is true, your Pastor is gone; but he who *†gives pastors* and teachers *after his own heart* still lives.—An under-shepherd is removed; but *‡the great Shepherd and Bishop of your souls* still remains.—A loving husband, a tender parent, a faithful friend, is no more; but he who supports each of these characters, in a way peculiar to himself, still continues. From these as well as from many other considerations, I might attempt to comfort you. But I must not depart from the path marked out in my text.—The quarter to which I mean to lead you for comfort is the same as that to which Christ conducted his disci-

* 1 Thess. iv. 13.

† Jer. iii. 15.

‡ 1 Pet. ii. last.

ples, in the prospect of his departure; which brings me to the

IId. Thing which I proposed to consider, viz. The assurance which our Lord gave them, in order to remove their sorrow; ye now have sorrow, but let this comfort you, "*I will see you again.*" Though Christ was going from them, he was only going for a time; and, my dear friends, though your beloved Pastor has left you in a very sorrowful state, rejoice that it is but for a time—your separation will not be perpetual.

Our Lord fulfilled his promise of seeing his disciples again, immediately after his resurrection from the dead—he fulfilled it when he called them out of this world—and he will fulfil it in a far more glorious manner, at the time of his second coming.

Such was his concern for his sorrowful disciples, that the very day on which he arose from the dead, he appeared to some of them. And in order to convince the Apostle Thomas, who was not then present, and who could not give credit to the report of his brethren, he afterwards appeared to him; suffering him to put his finger into the prints of those nails, by which he had been fixed to his cross, and to thrust his hand into that side, which the soldier with his spear had pierced. — Moreover, the writer of the Acts of the Apostles informs us, that
** he shewed himself alive unto them after*

• Acts i. 3.

his

his passion, by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

The disciples also received the fulfilment of this promise—“*I will see you again*”—immediately after their dissolution.—To die, is to depart, and * *be with Christ*. To die, is † *to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord*.—As many of you as have believed in Jesus, may derive great comfort from your meditations upon death, as it is thus represented. It is a representation which must lessen its terrors; nay, which, if it is rightly attended to, must render it a desirable event. It is a representation also of the most consolatory nature, under the loss of pious friends. They are gone to be with Christ, which is infinitely better than being with us; to weep on their account is criminal. They have left a state of distance from God, for a state of eternal happiness with him. They are ‡ *ever with the Lord*. They need not our pity, but rather are entitled to our congratulations. Could they look down from their thrones of glory, and address us, they would say, || *Weep not for us, but weep for yourselves, and for your children*. — Comfort yourselves, ye mourning Christians, with these considerations, under the loss of your dear Pastor: He is gone *to be with Christ*: he has left the church militant, to engage in the more exalted services of the church triumphant.

* Phil. i. 23. † 2 Cor. v. 8. ‡ 1 Thess. iv. 17.
|| Luke xxiii. 28.

But once more; this promise will receive a very glorious accomplishment, when the Lord Jesus shall come the second time.—In his discourses with his disciples, he made frequent mention of his second coming, and exhorted them to prepare themselves for it. In the most striking language he spoke of the glories of it; and assured them of infinite satisfaction and joy in that event. At his second coming, he will be seen, not by the disciples only, but by all mankind: ** every eye shall see him.* Affecting thought! Oh! that we could be brought to act under the influence of it, that so we may share in the pleasures which will then be experienced by his followers.

But it is not true of our absent Lord alone, that he will again be seen by his disciples; it is no less true of all who have died in him, that they shall be restored to the sight of their respective friends.

Ye are not sorrowing, my friends, under that loss ye now sustain, † *even as others, who have no hope.* That precious dust which ye so lately deposited in yonder tomb, is there resting in hope: your Pastor ‡ *is not dead, but sleeps:* your acquaintance with him is not at an end, it is only interrupted: Your connection is not dissolved, though it is at present obstructed. A time is coming, when he will shake off the slumbers of the grave; when the bands of death will be

* Rev. i. 7.

† 1 Thess. iv. 13.

‡ Mat. ix. 24.

loosed.

loosed (** for it is not possible that he should be holden of them*); and when he will present himself to your view, arrayed in the garments of salvation. A time is coming, when, at the head of a goodly company, collected from amongst those who have been accustomed to worship in this place, he will proceed to the throne of God, and say, Behold here I am and the children whom thou hast given me!

Christians, † *if in this life only we had hope in Christ, we should be of all men the most miserable*, but blessed be God, our hope pierces the glooms of death, and enters within the veil. Under its influence, a Christian can say with Job; ‡ “*I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh I shall see God!*”—|| *The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has begotten us again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and which fadeth not away!*—The pious dead are § *sleeping in Jesus*; and, when he returns, *he will bring them with him*. † *Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his Saints.*

But I proceed to the

III^d. Clause in the text, which contains our Lord's assurance to his disciples, that

* Acts ii. 24. † 1 Cor. xv. 19. ‡ Job xix. 25, 26.
 || 1 Pet. i. 3, 4. § 1 Thess. iv. 14. † Psal. cxvi. 15.

when

when they should see him again, "*their heart would rejoice.*"

His first appearance to them after his resurrection produced great joy ; * "*then were the disciples glad*" (says the Evangelist) "*when they saw the Lord.*" Their language after his death seems to intimate that they had been disappointed in him, that he was not the person for whom they had taken him ; † "*we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel.*" They were overjoyed, therefore, when he arose from the dead : their hope and faith immediately revived ; they regarded him as the faithful and true witness ; and wherever they met each other, their congratulations upon this glorious event were mutual—‡ "*The Lord is risen indeed !*"

But if his first appearance to his disciples after his resurrection afforded great satisfaction, with what raptures do they now behold him in his exalted state ; and in a particular manner, with what rapture will they view him at his second coming !—On earth, they saw him in a state of poverty, beset with temptations, and conflicting with enemies ; they saw him with a || "*visage marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men.*" During their acquaintance with him in this world, § "*he was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief ;*

* John xx 20. † Luke xxiv. 21. ‡ Ver. 34. || Isa. lii. 14. § liii. 3.

** he was a reproach of men, and despised of the people.*" But what an alteration is now made in his appearance! and under what different circumstances will he be seen at his second coming!—Yes, Sirs, he will come † *with power and great glory*; for, to use his own incomprehensible words, ‡ *“ he will come in his own glory; in the glory of his Father; and all the holy angels with him.”* He will come like the triumphant conqueror of sin, death, and hell. He will come like the illustrious king of Zion, to conduct his followers to their destined thrones, and to make them partakers of his glory. He will come to fulfil the prayer which he offered up to his Father, § *“ Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me.”* — And will not this be a most joyful day to the disciples of Jesus? Do you think it possible to have an adequate idea of the satisfaction they will then feel? To be noticed in the triumphant processions of kings and heroes would be a mark of honour and distinction, which could not fail of raising in our minds very exalted pleasure; but—to be noticed in that glorious appearance which the Son of God will make in the great day, what inexpressible delight must this occasion! As many of you, oh my hearers, as now see || *no form or comeliness* in

* Psalm xxii. 6. † Mat. xxiv. 30. ‡ Luke ix. 26.
 Mat. xvi. 27. xxv. 31. § John xvii. 24. || Isa. liii. 2.

the Saviour, wherefore *you should desire him*, be assured, that ten thousand worlds will then appear as nothing, compared with one smile from his countenance. * *“ Kiss the Son ”* then, *“ lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little: Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.”*

And will the sight of the exalted Saviour put such joy into the hearts of his disciples? In like manner, that interview which glorified saints will have in the future world, will produce a joy unspeakable. I think there can be no just cause for us to question, whether good men will know each other in that world; I take it for granted that they will. And if so, how will their hearts rejoice in the glorious alteration which it will then be seen God has made in their appearance and circumstances! What an alteration will you then behold in your dear departed Pastor!—No more will ye witness his struggles with affliction. No more will ye hear him complaining of pain and weakness; for † *God has already wiped every tear from his eyes, and brought the days of his mourning to an everlasting period.* Moreover, at the resurrection of the great day, ‡ *whatever was corruptible will put on incorruption; and whatever was mortal will put on immortality: for then will be brought to pass the saying which is written, “ Death is swallowed up in victory.”*—That body which was lately sown

* Psalm ii. 12. † Rev. vii. last. Isa. lx. 20. ‡ 1 Cor. xv. 42—54.

in corruption, will then be raised in incorruption; that body which was lately sown in dishonour, will then be raised in glory. What was sown in weakness, will then be raised in power; and what was sown a natural body, will then be raised a spiritual body. Though it once bore a resemblance to the earthly, it will then bear a resemblance to the heavenly Adam. Comfort yourselves, then, and comfort one another, with these words.—Once more,

IV. Our Lord assured his disciples, that when they should see him again, "*their joy no man would be able to take from them.*" When he was in this world, the pleasures arising from his presence were very frequently abated, by the intimations which he gave them of his intended departure. But when Christ and his disciples meet again, they meet to part no more; (to use the words of St. Paul) * "*they shall be ever with the Lord.*" Nothing can arise to interrupt their fellowship, and much less to destroy it. Death, that cruel enemy, who is continually separating chief friends in this world, can obtain no admission into the next. † "*Blessed and holy is he, that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power—.*" The joy which will result from the vision of Christ in the future world, will be everlasting: and give me leave to add, so will

* 1 Thess. iv. 17.

† Rev. xx. 6.

that

that which will then result from the fellowship of good men. The most intimate friends often endure the agonizing pains of separation. The affectionate husband is here required to part with his beloved wife; and the affectionate wife with her beloved husband. Parents must part with their lovely offspring; and the lovely offspring, from their tender parents. Friends, whose souls, like the souls of Jonathan and David, are knit together, are rent asunder. Ministers also are called away from the dear people of their charge, and the people from their affectionate and faithful Ministers;—nor is this a separation the least painful, as appears from that very tender scene which is represented at the end of the xxth chapter of the Acts, where the Ephesian Elders (at parting from the Apostle Paul, who had formerly been their Minister) are said to have *wept sore*, to have *fallen on his neck*, and to have *kissed him*, *sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake*, “*that they should see his face no more.*”—But amidst all the vicissitudes of the present state, let us contemplate that unchanging eternal friendship which reigns above. In heaven good men meet to part no more; their friendship is undecaying; their pleasures unwithering: “*their joy no man taketh from them.*” Comfort yourselves, then, my friends, under all the pains of your late bereavement. Ye shall see the face of your ho-

noured Pastor again, never more to be parted from him : ye, with him, will be made * *pil-lars in the temple of your God, and go no more out.* What satisfaction does the Apostle Paul take in the thought of renewing his acquaintance with good men in the heavenly world! † “ *For what*” (says he) “ *is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy.*”

Having, as I proposed, attended to the several parts of the text, I will trespass only a few minutes longer on your time in concluding my discourse with some applicatory thoughts. And

1. Let what has been said, teach you submission, under the heavy affliction with which ye are now exercised.—At the same time that the sovereignty of God appears, in removing your dear Pastor from you, his goodness and compassion no less appear, in providing such strong consolation for you—you are far from being left comfortless; and therefore every repining thought should be suppressed. Your duty is to ‡ “ *be still, and know that the Lord is God.*” || *A vessel—fitted for the master’s use is broken.* One of § *the precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, how has he been esteemed as an earthen pitcher, the work of the hands of the potter!* The

* Rev. iii. 12.
|| 2 Tim. ii. 21.

† 1 Thess. ii. 19, 20.
§ Lam. iv. 2.

‡ Psal. xlv. 8, 10.

case is lamentable, but does not warrant repining. It is your duty to say, as did your blessed Lord; * "*Father—not my will, but thine be done.*" The providence is mysterious, and our duty is patiently to wait for the arrival of that time, when he will explain the mysteries of his conduct, and in the fullest manner perform that promise which he made to Peter, when he said, † "*what I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.*"

Hitherto I have been addressing the members of this church and congregation; but in this place particular attention seems to be due to a mourning Widow and her Children.

My dear sister — Submission to that very affecting stroke of Providence by which one of the kindest of husbands, and one of the best of fathers, is removed from our world, may appear a hard task. In order that you may be induced to perform it, suffer me to remind you, that as his situation is infinitely happier than ever it was here, so your own is not altogether so deplorable as you may be ready to think it.—From this time you are taken under the special protection of heaven. God will supply the place of that valuable relative which you have lost: accordingly he has directed his servants to ‡ *leave their father-*

* Luke xxii. 42.

† John xiii. 7.

‡ Jer. xlix. 11.

less children with him —“ I will keep them alive,” says he, *“ and let thy widows trust in me.”* Your afflictions abound ; and it is my prayer to God, that he would make your consolations much more abound.—To his care and blessing I commend you. May his Grace be sufficient for you, may his Spirit comfort, and his Providence smile upon you ; particularly may he give you this pleasure, (than which you cannot have a greater) to see all
* *your children walk in the truth.*

My dear young friends — It is with real concern that I reflect on your loss. —To qualify you for the business of the world — To furnish you with every necessary degree of human knowledge—To introduce you into situations of comfort and advantage, —constituted the least part of that attention which your late parent paid to you. If it was his desire to see you respectable and happy in this world, it was much more his desire to fit you for eternal happiness in the next. In doing which, he endeavoured to store your minds with the principles of heavenly wisdom ; he urged upon you the early remembrance of your Creator ; he represented the ways of religion as † *ways of pleasantness*, and its paths as *paths of peace* ; he set before you such an example, as had the most direct tendency to fill you with reverence and

* 3 John 4.

† Prov. iii. 17.

with love to it. He ceased not to commend you to God in his daily prayers before the throne of grace. In a word, *he travailed in birth for his dear children, that Christ might be formed in their hearts.*

My young friends—your loss is truly great, and if I may form my judgment from the melting scene which some of you exhibited at the grave of your father, you are not insensible of it. The manner in which you were there affected, strongly proved your love to him.—I intreat you then, out of regard to his memory, as well as out of regard to your own immortal souls, follow the advice which he gave you, and imitate the example which he set you; thus, as you grow in years and stature, you will grow ** in favour with God and man.*

Be thankful for, and attentive to, the instructions of your surviving parent. Her best endeavours will be directed to the promotion of your happiness: and I hope it will be your care through life to repay her solicitude for you, by the most amiable and dutiful conduct. As much as in you lies, take from her troubles, and increase her comforts, under the loss of your beloved father; let her find support from your affection and from your piety.

2. Since God has seen fit to put an end

* Luke ii. last.

to the ministry of his dear servant, let me earnestly call upon you who constantly attended upon it, to recollect the leading objects which he had in view. To convince you of your misery, as sinners against God—to bring you to repentance, and to faith in our Lord Jesus Christ—to excite you to follow holiness—and, in a word, to meeten you for heaven—were the great ends of his preaching.—Now then he is no more with you, to excite your attention to these things, let me earnestly entreat you to keep his admonitions and counsels in your minds. * *“Remember him who has had the rule over you, and has spoken unto you the word of God, whose faith follow, considering the end of his conversation; Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and for ever.”*

3. Let such of you as had a high esteem for my dear brother, but who neglected to pay a practical attention to his ministry, consider what danger you are in of never more renewing an acquaintance with him. In your present state you are excluded from those regions into which he is gone; I cannot therefore address you in the words of the text, *“Ye shall see me again, and your hearts shall rejoice:”* for if you retain your present characters, you shall see him no more; or if you ever do see him, you will see in

* Heb. xiii. 7.

him what I am sure will pierce your hearts with anguish, in him you will behold the person of an accuser.—Lord, (will he say) * “*I called, but they refused; I stretched out my hand, but they did not regard: they set at nought all my counsel, and would have none of my reproof.*”

Surely, my dear hearers, the very idea of meeting him as your accuser, whom you have so long considered as your friend, and of meeting him in this character before the tribunal of God, must affect you. Let me then urge you to a timely concern about your immortal souls. † “*Arise, therefore, and be doing, and the Lord be with you!*” ‡ “*Give diligence to make your calling and election sure.*”—How greatly will your late minister rejoice in the final salvation of such of you who were left by him in the service of Satan! How will he welcome you into the regions of glory, saying, || “*Are not these as brands plucked out of the fire!*”

4. Let us all be excited, by the solemn providence we this day lament, to give the closest attention to the ministry of the word. God puts the treasures of heavenly grace and knowledge into § *earthen vessels*, which are often breaking — † *The prophets, do they live for ever?* Alas! they are as frail as their

* Prov. i. 24, 25.
|| Zech. iii. 2.

† 1 Chron. xxii. 16.
§ 2 Cor. iv. 7.

‡ 2 Pet. i. 10.
† Zech. i. 5.

hearers ! In the recollection of this, * *“ give the more earnest heed to the things which ye hear, lest at any time ye should let them slip ; for how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation !”*

If to all the exhortations which I have this day given you, I may be permitted to add one more, it shall

5. Be this : Let it be your care, till Providence places another Pastor over you, † *“ to preserve the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.”* ‡ *“ Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines.”* Do not suffer yourselves to be influenced by || *itching ears.*—Let your attendance upon the worship of God IN THIS PLACE be regular ; let a reigning love to the interest which Christ has established here govern your actions.—I do not give these exhortations because I think that you stand in particular need of them, for I bear you record that, as a Society, you have been patterns of love and harmony ; your affection for your late minister was truly exemplary.—Maintain your character. Still § *“ be of one heart and of one mind ; † follow the things that make for peace, the things wherewith one may edify another—Thus *† the God of love and peace shall be with you.”*

* Heb. ii. 1, 3.

|| 2 Tim. iv. 3.

‡ Rom. xiv. 19.

† Eph. iv. 3.

§ Acts iv. 32.

*† 2 Cor. xiii. 11.

† Heb. xiii. 9.

2 Cor. xiii. 11.

* “ *And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified.*”

† *To Him be glory in the church, by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.*

* Acts xx. 32.

† Ephes. iii. last.

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